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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIA - RADMANOVIC DISCUSSES DEFENSE PROPERTY,
POLITICAL SITUATION, SNSD CONCLUSIONS

REF: A. A) SARAJEVO 226

[1](#)B. B) SARAJEVO 149

Classified By: Ambassador Charles English for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) On February 6, the Ambassador met with Bosnian Serb member of the Tri-Presidency Nebojsa Radmanovic over lunch for a wide-ranging discussion on current political developments. The Ambassador and Radmanovic had detailed discussions on defense reform, and Radmanovic again signaled his support for the draft transfer agreement on movable defense property. He also pledged to continue to advocate for it with senior Republika Srpska (RS) leadership. (Note. Despite Radmanovic's assurances, the RS government subsequently, on February 7, declined to approve the agreement. End Note.) Radmanovic expressed concern over Party for Democratic Action (SDA) President Tihic's recent moves to block further progress in police reform and sought the Ambassador's assistance to get Tihic back on board. The Ambassador took the opportunity to relay serious USG concerns over recent conclusions from Radmanovic's Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) main board that explicitly referred to RS rights to "self-determination" and challenged the authority of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the use of the Bonn Powers. Radmanovic told the Ambassador that there existed no separatist "sentiment" in the RS, and the conclusions were consistent with long-standing SNSD policy and should be viewed as a reaction to equally extreme positions from Party for BiH (SBiH) President Haris Silajdzic. Radmanovic also sought the Ambassador's assistance in securing increased US investment in the RS. End Summary.

RADMANOVIC PREMATURE OPTIMISM ON DEFENSE PROPERTY

[1](#)2. (C) On February 6, the Ambassador met with Bosnian Serb member of the Tri-Presidency Nebojsa Radmanovic over lunch for a wide-ranging discussion on current political developments. The Ambassador again stressed the importance of resolving the movable defense property issues in the near term and encouraged Radmanovic to use his influence to secure RS approval of the proposed draft transfer agreement. Radmanovic stressed that it was in the interest of all Bosnian leaders to do things that would speed the NATO

accession process, and defense property issues should be concluded quickly. Radmanovic told the Ambassador that he had personally engaged with Dodik and RSNA Speaker Igor Radojicic on movable defense property, and he believed they supported the proposed agreement. (Note. Radmanovic's assurances on defense property proved premature. Later on February 6 and on February 7, Dodik's government backed way from commitments to approve the agreement. End Note.)

TIHIC MAIN ROADBLOCK TO SAA

13. (C) Commenting on recent developments on police reform, Radmanovic noted that the political situation in Bosnia was "not good." Radmanovic said that if everything he had "heard was true," the actions of SDA President Sulejman Tihic at the Siroki Brijeg meeting of political party leaders threatened to derail Bosnia's movement towards the EU. Radmanovic asked the Ambassador to reach out to Tihic and urge him to stick to prior commitments on police reform, so Bosnia could sign its Stabilization and Association Agreement. Radmanovic, referring to the self-imposed February 15 deadline for completing police reform, noted that time was short. If Tihic did not honor his commitments Bosnia would "stand before Brussels without an agenda."

SNSD MAIN BOARD CONCLUSIONS CHALLENGE DAYTON

14. (C) The Ambassador pressed Radmanovic, who also serves as the Chairman of the SNSD Executive Board, to encourage SNSD to renounce the provocative conclusions from its January 26 Main Board meeting. The Ambassador told Radmanovic that the conclusions were anti-Dayton and called into question the

party's commitment to the Bosnian state. Assertions that the RS had the right to "self-determination" under the Dayton Accords, calls for already transferred state competencies to be returned to the entities, and an explicit rejection of High Representative's authority, including threats to defy him, were particularly troubling to the USG. The Ambassador told Radmanovic that SNSD seemed to hide behind rhetoric of "supporting Dayton" but continuously took steps to undermine state-level institutions and structures. The Ambassador stressed that Washington had become very concerned with the SNSD conclusions, which seemed to signal a unilateral push to alter the constitutional order in Bosnia.

RADMANOVIC: NO SEPARATIST AGENDA, CONCLUSIONS ARE REACTION

15. (C) Radmanovic said he would speak "frankly" and maintained a strong, though non-confrontational, line in regards to the SNSD conclusions. He prefaced his comments with the statement, "there is no separatist agenda in Banja Luka, and the conclusions should not concern the international community," adding "the Dayton accords were the greatest diplomatic success in Europe since World War II." Radmanovic said that the SNSD conclusions were consistent with previous party platforms and communiques and should not have been surprising. Radmanovic told the Ambassador that SNSD had released a similar document before the April 2006 constitutional reform talks, but had proven itself capable of negotiating to secure a better future for both Bosnia and the RS (implying that it, therefore, did not need to act on them). Radmanovic stressed that "aside from a few NGOs and other groups," no one in the RS questioned that everything must be done to get Bosnia into NATO and the EU. In that light, Radmanovic argued that the EU had mismanaged its Western Balkans policy and should have permitted all countries in the region to sign a Stabilization and Association Agreement long ago. Within that framework, Radmanovic said, Kosovo "would not be a problem," and Bosnia could "more easily solve its internal issues."

16. (C) Radmanovic argued that the SNSD conclusions were "in defense of Dayton." He repeatedly stressed SNSD was only reacting to the behavior of Party for BiH (SBiH) President

Haris Silajdzic and "certain OHR measures that did not benefit Bosnian citizens." Radmanovic claimed that any talk of "self-determination or secession" must be considered in light of Silajdzic's constant assertions that the RS should be abolished. The international community should expect SNSD to protect the rights of RS citizens if Silajdzic or other Federation politicians sought to illegally ignore their interests, Radmanovic asserted. Regarding OHR, Radmanovic noted that SNSD had long supported its closure and believed that "30 percent of the 800 plus imposed measures" were not in accordance with Dayton. While SNSD would not seek extra-legal means to return competencies to the entity level, Radmanovic argued, all parties should seek to examine the state and entities in terms of their relative capacity to undertake certain functions. If a certain transferred competency could be better handled by the entities, it should be returned, Radmanovic suggested. Radmanovic said that OHR and the High Representative maintained incoherently that the Bonn Powers should remain until an undefined point in the future, but they have failed to explain why OHR and the Bonn Powers remain necessary. Radmanovic told the Ambassador that "years" of poor OHR leadership have failed to build trust among Bosnian parties, impeded democratic development, and proven unable to create the preconditions for a stable state. Radmanovic made clear that SNSD had no intention of renouncing its conclusions.

BRING IN US INVESTMENT

17. (C) Radmanovic closed the discussion by asking the Ambassador for assistance in securing US investment in the RS. Radmanovic told the Ambassador that the only significant foreign investment in the RS came from Russia, and this created the misperception that Russia was securing undue influence in Banja Luka. Radmanovic noted that maintaining "balance" in foreign investment was critical and increasing the American business presence would send a message to "the general public and political leadership" that the US sought to maintain ties and influence in the region.

COMMENT: A WARNING SIGN

18. (C) Radmanovic is the more moderate and polished face of SNSD. He is often prepared to criticize Dodik privately and stake out a different position when he believes Dodik has gone too far, as he has on moveable defense property. Therefore, it is disturbing that Radmanovic so vigorously, albeit calmly, defended the SNSD Main Board's January 26 conclusions. As we reported previously, the conclusions amount to a manifesto that, for all intents and purposes, outlines a plan that would, at best, deeply compromise and could destroy the Bosnian state (Ref A). Radmanovic's justifications for SNSD's conclusions are disingenuous at best. Though Silajdzic has certainly called for the abolition of the RS, he has not done so publicly for months. In other words, there has been no immediate Bosniak provocation. Though Radmanovic is correct that the state often lacks the capacity to fulfill its obligations, this is in large part because of constant Bosnian Serb obstruction of state-level institutions and more recently, what appears to us like a concerted campaign by Dodik and his SNSD allies to undermine the state. Finally, Radmanovic's "reassurances" that there are only a "few NGOs" with a separatist agenda in the RS is only partially true. As we have reported previously, and no doubt Radmanovic knows, separatist sentiment is much more common among Bosnian Serbs, and many of Dodik's public statements over the last year have tacitly encouraged it (Ref B).

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